

REPORT FOR SCHOOLS FORUM

1.	Date of meeting:	5 th December 2025
2.	Title:	Falling Rolls Fund Policy
3.	Directorate:	Finance and Customer Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the Department for Education (DfE) guidance on Falling Rolls and proposes a local policy for Rotherham. The aim is to support schools experiencing temporary reductions in pupil numbers and associated funding challenges.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the schools forum:

- Note the DfE guidance on Falling Rolls.
- Approve the adoption of the proposed Falling Rolls Policy for Rotherham.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION & CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Falling Rolls Policy has been developed in response to a decline in birth rates in Rotherham, which has led to surplus places in primary schools. This trend is expected to continue for several years. The policy aims to help schools remain viable until pupil numbers recover later in future years.
- 3.2 Local authorities have discretion to operate a Falling Rolls Fund, which can be used to support schools where demand for places is forecast to recover and places required within 3 to 5 years, based on School Capacity (SCAP) data.

4. DfE GUIDANCE

- 4.1 The following are key points to note from DfE guidance:

- The DfE have removed the mandatory restriction, that schools were only eligible for falling rolls funding if they were judged 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted.
- Local authorities have flexibility to set additional eligibility criteria and funding rates.
- Schools Forum must agree the value of the fund and allocation criteria. The LA should regularly update the Schools Forum on the use of the fund.

- 4.2 Further DfE guidance on falling rolls can be accessed under section 31 of the [Schools operational guide: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)
- 4.3 The Falling Rolls Fund forms part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) within the Schools Block. Annual value of the Fund should be agreed as part of setting the Schools Block budget for the coming year (as part of the schools budget planning cycle).

5. PROPOSED ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 5.1 Criteria for allocating falling rolls funding should contain clear objective trigger points for qualification, and a clear formula for calculating allocations.
- 5.2 The proposed eligibility criteria and operating methodology for the Rotherham Falling Rolls Fund is as follows:
- **Minimum Reduction Threshold:** Schools must show a reduction of at least 10% in pupil numbers between two consecutive October census dates.
 - **Demographic Justification:** The reduction must be due to demographic or structural changes, supported by SCAP projections showing recovery within 3 to 5 years.
 - **Surplus Capacity:** The school must have surplus capacity that exceeds a minimum number of pupils or a percentage of its Published Admission Number (PAN) e.g. minimum 15% of PAN.
 - **Exclusions:** The reduction cannot result from bulge classes or planned PAN reductions agreed with the local authority.
 - **Curriculum Impact:** Funding must address risks to curriculum delivery caused by reduced funding.
- 5.3 The proposed Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Falling Rolls Policy in full is included as an appendix for approval by the Schools Forum.

6. NAMES & CONTACT DETAILS

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